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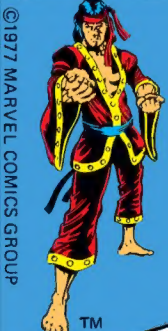
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THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI,

MASTER OF KUNG FU



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ADMIT IT, SON
OF FU MANCHU! IN
ME YOU HAVE MET
YOUR MASTER--
AND YOUR
DOOM!

SAVAGE
IS THE
SKULL CRUSHER!

CRAIG+FRANK

"Call me Shang-Chi, as my **father** did, when he raised me and molded my mind and my body in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father. Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu**, the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to **honor** him would bring nothing but **dishonor** to the spirit of my **name**.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: MASTER OF KUNG FU!™

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER

DOUG MOENCH /
WRITER

JIM CRAIG /
ARTIST

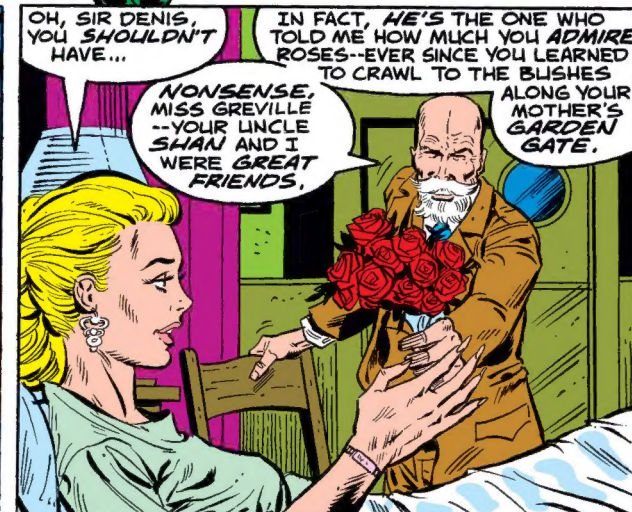
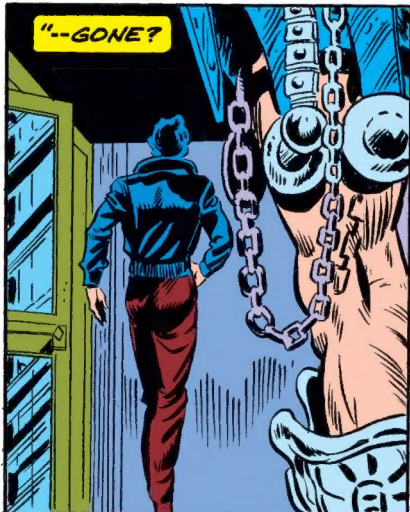
TARTAG /
INKER

PETE IRO /
LETTERER

P. RACHE /
COLORIST

ARCHIE GOODWIN /
EDITOR





WELL, THEY ARE LOVELY, SIR DENIS, BUT YOU STILL SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE TO THE TROUBLE, I'M BEING RELEASED TODAY.

AS SOON AS THEY BRING THE PAPERS FOR ME TO SIGN, I CAN CLIMB RIGHT OUT OF HERE.

I SEE, WELL, IN CERTAIN WAYS I SUPPOSE HE IS A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK...

WELL, IN THAT CASE, I'LL EXPECT YOU BACK IN THE OFFICE ON MONDAY.

AND PERHAPS YOU'D BE GOOD ENOUGH TO SORT THROUGH THIS CORRESPONDENCE OVER THE WEEKEND.

IT'S BEEN ACCUMULATING EVER SINCE YOUR AH, ACCIDENT. MOST OF IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN OPENED.

IN FACT, CLIVE--AH, MR. RESTON--IS DROPPING BY TO ESCORT ME HOME.

NOT THAT MISS CARSTAIRS HASN'T BEEN AN EFFICIENT SUBSTITUTE, BUT YOUR FILING SYSTEM IS RATHER UNIQUE.

NOW HERE I GO AGAIN I SEE THE CRYSTAL VISIONS I KEEP MY VISIONS TO MYSELF

IT'S ONLY ME WHO WANTS TO WRAP AROUND YOUR DREAM AND...

HAVE YOU ANY DREAMS YOU'D LIKE TO SELL? DREAMS OF LONELINESS, LIKE A HEART-BEAT, DRIVES YOU MAD...

...IN THE STILL-NESS OF REMEMBERING WHAT YOU HAD AND WHAT YOU LOST...

MEOWL



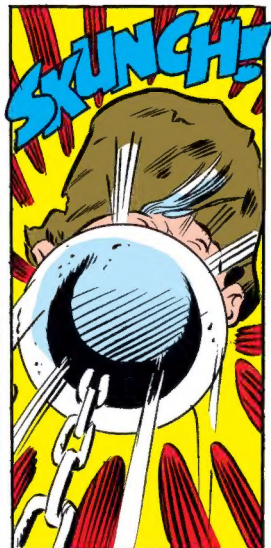


Y'HEAR ME--? ON YER WAY!

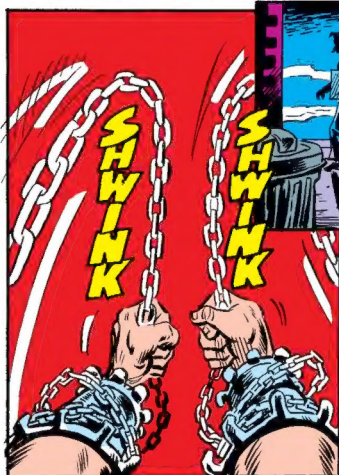
THERE'S NOTHIN' TO STEAL BACK 'ERE, NOTHIN' BUT--



--TRASH.



SKUNCH!



SHWINK

SHWINK



HE CONTINUES IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

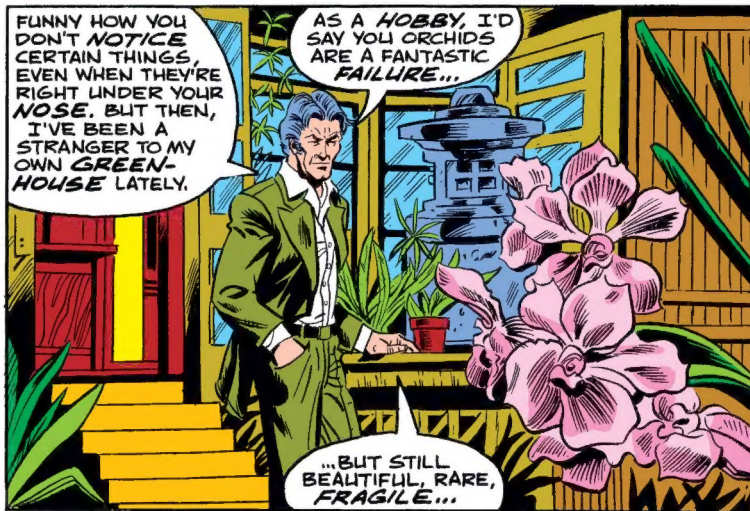
THEN... IT IS SAFE TO RETURN...



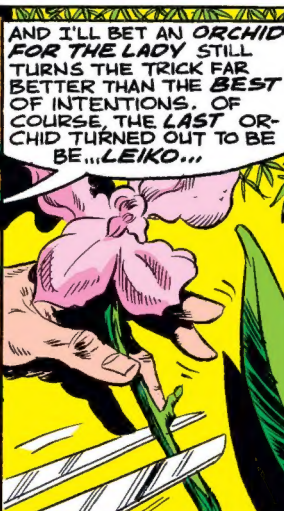
FUNNY HOW YOU DON'T NOTICE CERTAIN THINGS, EVEN WHEN THEY'RE RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE. BUT THEN, I'VE BEEN A STRANGER TO MY OWN GREEN-HOUSE LATELY.

AS A HOBBY, I'D SAY YOU ORCHIDS ARE A FANTASTIC FAILURE...

...BUT STILL BEAUTIFUL, RARE, FRAGILE...



AND I'LL BET AN ORCHID FOR THE LADY STILL TURNS THE TRICK FAR BETTER THAN THE BEST OF INTENTIONS. OF COURSE, THE LAST ORCHID TURNED OUT TO BE...LEIKO...



"THEIR NEW RECORDING IS GOOD..."

THUNDER ONLY HAPPENS ♪
WHEN IT'S RAININ' ♪
PLAYERS ONLY LOVE YOU ♪
THEN THEY'RE PLAYIN'... ♪

WOMEN, THEY WILL COME
AND THEY WILL GO...

"...BUT NOT ON A DAY FILLED WITH DARKNESS."

"THE MUSIC CANNOT CHANGE MY MOOD."

KITCH

"INSTEAD, THE MUSIC ITSELF HAS BEEN CHANGED, MY MOOD TURNING BEAUTIFUL SOUNDS INTO BLEAK... STARK."

"AND THE WALLS OF THIS SMALL ROOM--THEY, TOO, ARE BLEAK..." STARK.

"BETTER TO WALK... TO FACE THE REAL NIGHT."

BLACK JACK!

HULLO, SIR DENIS!

HOSPITAL

SORRY I'M LATE-- MADE A LITTLE STOP.

BUT HOW IS SHE?

FINE, BLACKJACK. SHE'S BEING RELEASED TODAY, AS A MATTER OF FACT, AND SHE'S ONLY WAITING FOR --

NAYLAND!

EH--?

RESTON! WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' HERE?

WARMING UP FOR A RETURN TO FINE FORM, MY DEAR MR. TARR...

BUT IT'S YOU I'VE BEEN MEANING TO SPEAK WITH, NAYLAND. I THINK WE'RE BOTH AGREED THAT IT'S GONE ON LONG ENOUGH...



...SO I'M WILLING TO CELEBRATE MY RETURN TO HUMANITY BY APOLOGIZING FOR WHAT I SAID AT THE TAIL-END OF THE WAR-YORE AFFAIR.

OH, WELL...I'M GRATEFUL, CLIVE, BUT I'VE BEEN HAVING SOME DOUBTS MYSELF LATELY --ESPECIALLY AFTER THAT ERIC SLAUGHTER BUSINESS-- DOUBTS ABOUT WHAT MY LIFE HAS BECOME...

...WHAT IT MEANS --WHAT'S HAPPENED TO PETRIE, SHANG-CHI, TO ALL OF US...WE'VE ALL BEEN CHANGED.

IT'S NOT A PLEASANT FEELING, CLIVE, CONVINCED YOU'VE BEEN THE "GOOD GUY" FOR SO MANY YEARS--

--AND THEN OPENING YOUR EYES TO FIND THAT SOMETHING HAS CHANGED AND YOUR CONVICTIONS ARE SUDDENLY ALL WRONG.

YOU MEAN YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT RESIGNING FROM MI-6?

LET'S JUST SAY I'M CONTEMPLATING A NUMBER OF OPTIONS, AND HOPING TO REACH SOME SORT OF DECISION SOON... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME.

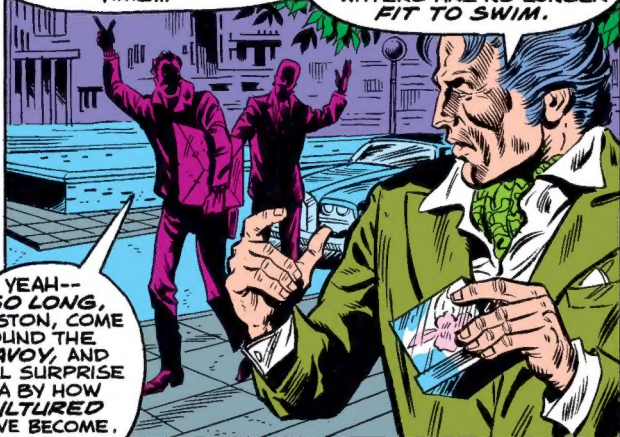
GOOD TO HEAR IT, NAYLAND.



TRADECRAFT HAS CHANGED A GREAT DEAL SINCE YOUR TIME--EVEN MY FATHER'S TIME...

BLACK AND WHITE HAVE BLURRED TOGETHER, GOTTEN MUDDY. THE WATERS ARE NO LONGER FIT TO SWIM.

YEAH-- SO LONG, RESTON, COME 'ROUND THE SAVOY, AND I'LL SURPRISE YA BY HOW CULTURED I'VE BECOME.



"I STEP INTO REAL NIGHT, AND--"

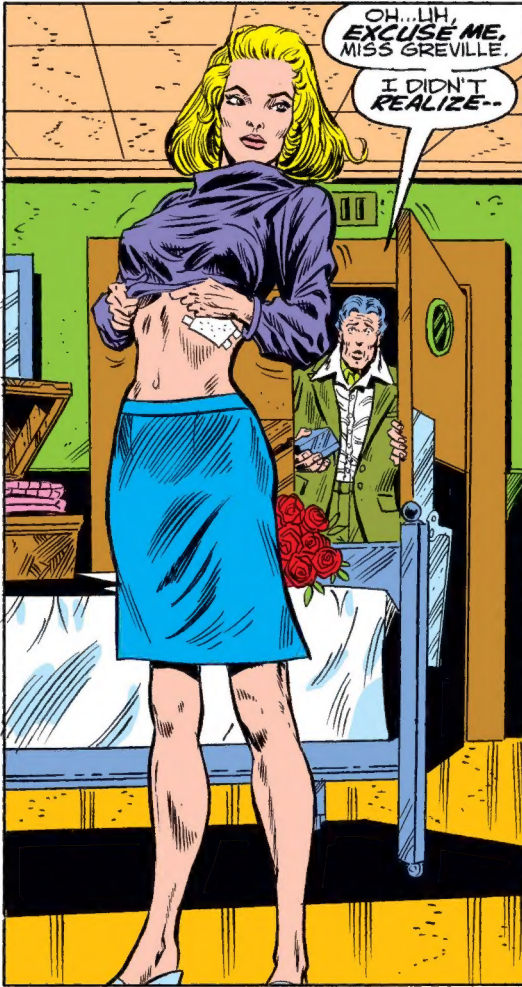
"--?!"

"THE SOUND OF GLASS-- SHATTERING AT THE END OF THIS PASSAGEWAY FILLED WITH DARKNESS..."

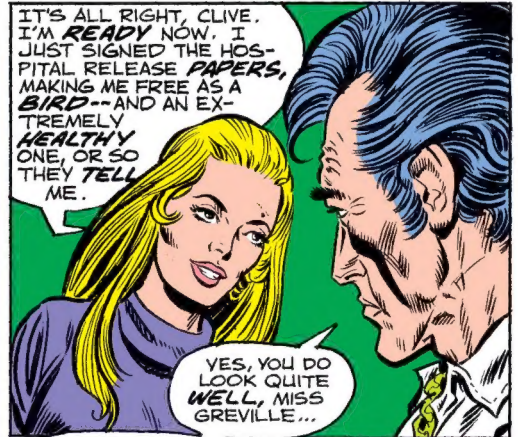
"...WEARING THE SOFT CLOAK OF MYSTERY.

"SHOULD I...?"

"YES."



OH...UH,
EXCUSE ME,
MISS GREVILLE.
I DIDN'T
REALIZE--



IT'S ALL RIGHT, CLIVE.
I'M **READY** NOW. I
JUST SIGNED THE HOS-
PITAL RELEASE **PAPERS**,
MAKING ME FREE AS A
BIRD-- AND AN EX-
TREMELY
HEALTHY
ONE, OR SO
THEY **TELL**
ME.

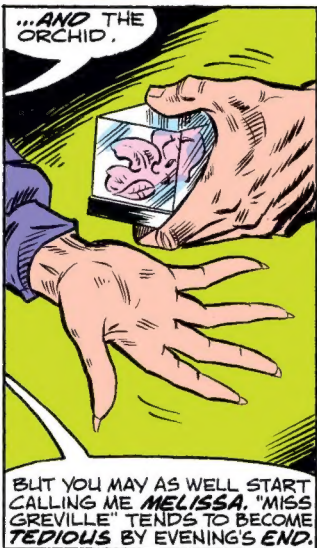
YES, YOU DO
LOOK QUITE
WELL, MISS
GREVILLE...



...**BEAUTIFUL**,
AS A MATTER OF
STRICT FACT.

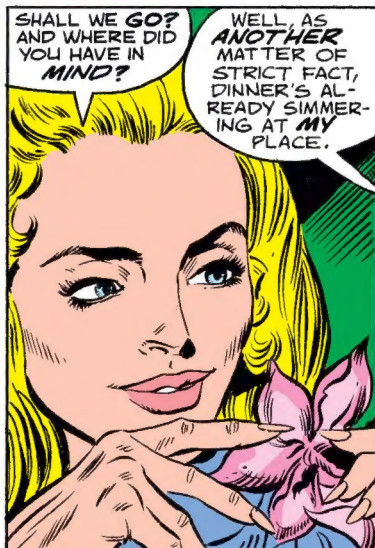
ONE WOULDN'T
EVEN **KNOW**
YOU'D BEEN
IN THE
HOSPITAL.

WHY,
THANK
YOU, CLIVE--
FOR THE
COMPLIMENT.



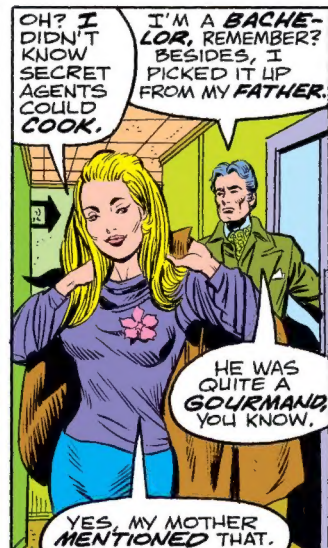
...AND THE
ORCHID.

BUT YOU MAY AS WELL START
CALLING ME **MELISSA**. "MISS
GREVILLE" TENDS TO BECOME
TEDIOUS BY EVENING'S END.



SHALL WE **GO**?
AND WHERE DID
YOU HAVE IN
MIND?

WELL, AS
ANOTHER
MATTER OF
STRICT FACT,
DINNER'S AL-
READY **SIMMER-**
ING AT **MY**
PLACE.



OH? I
DIDN'T
KNOW
SECRET
AGENTS
COULD
COOK.

I'M A **BACHE-**
LOR, REMEMBER?
BESIDES, I
PICKED IT UP
FROM MY **FATHER**.

HE WAS
QUITE A
GOURMAND,
YOU KNOW.

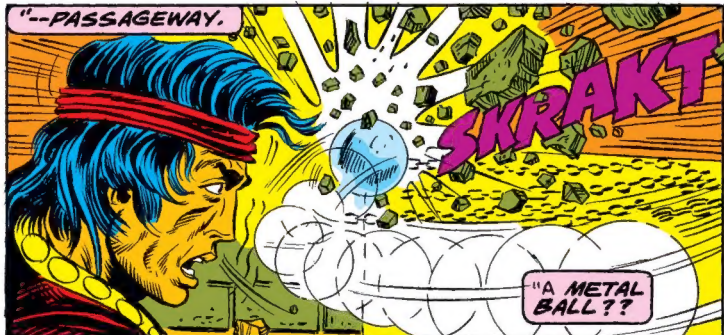
YES, MY MOTHER
MENTIONED THAT.

"YES, I **MUST** INVESTIGATE...MUST SEEK TO **PIERCE THE CLOAK**, TOUCH THE **HEART** MYSTERY..."

"...LURKING AT THE END OF THIS--"

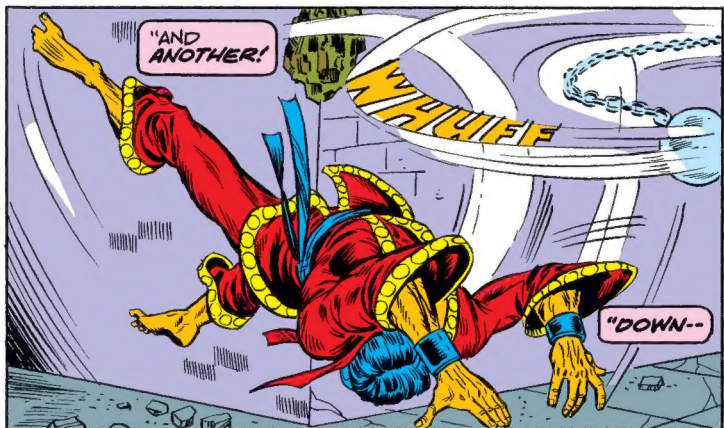


"--PASSAGEWAY."



"A METAL BALL??"

"AND ANOTHER!"

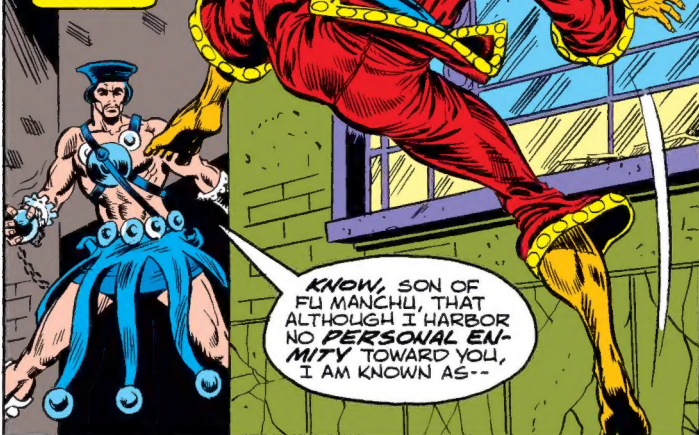


"DOWN--"

"--AND UP, OUT OF RANGE..."

"...NEXT TO A WINDOW OF COLORED GLASS, SHATTERED TO LURE ME HERE, BACK INTO THIS DESERTED COURTYARD, TO FACE..."

"...WHOM?"



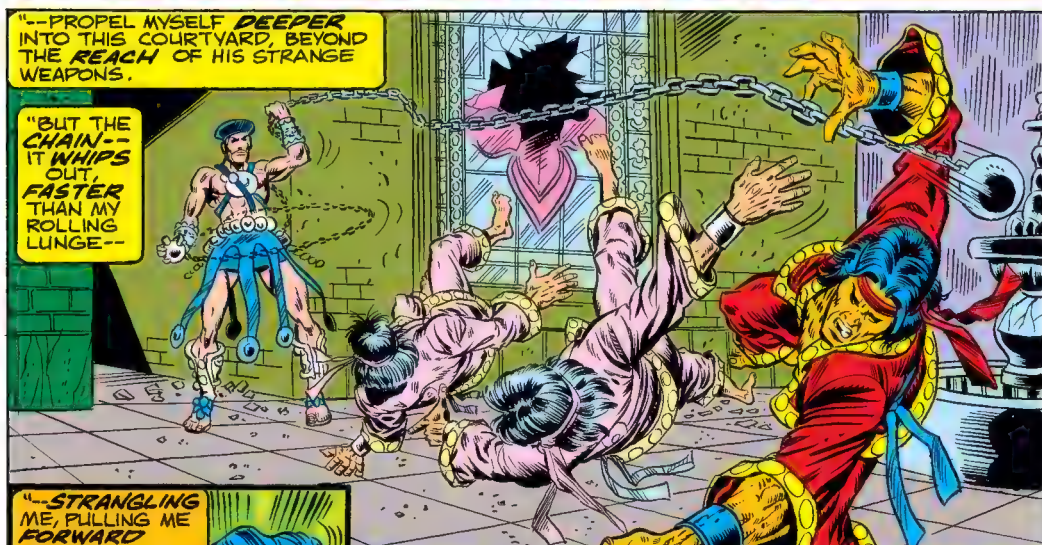
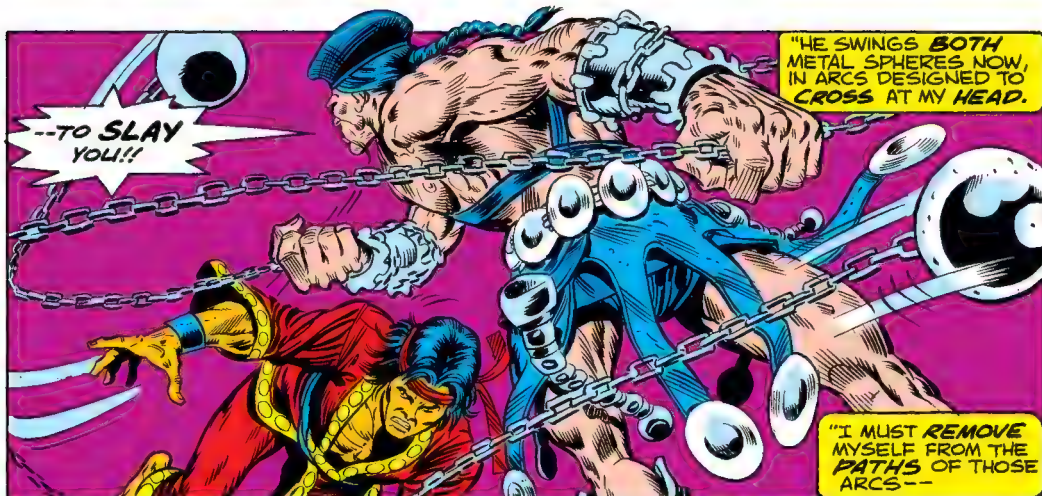
KNOW, SON OF FU MANCHU, THAT ALTHOUGH I HARBOR NO PERSONAL ENMITY TOWARD YOU, I AM KNOWN AS--

--THE **SKULL CRUSHER**... AND IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY FOR ME TO **FIND YOU** BEFORE YOU **LEAVE LONDON**!

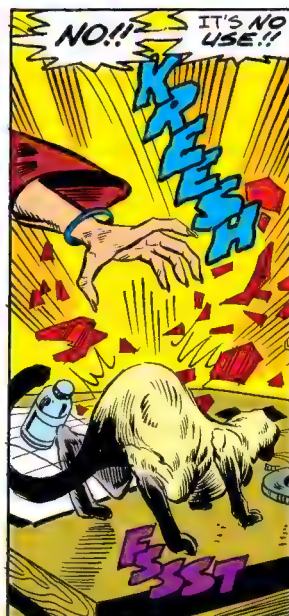
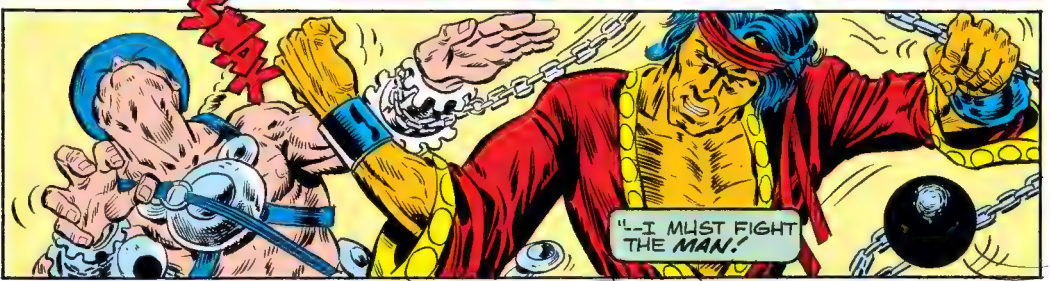
"LEAVE? BUT I HAVE NO PLANS TO--"



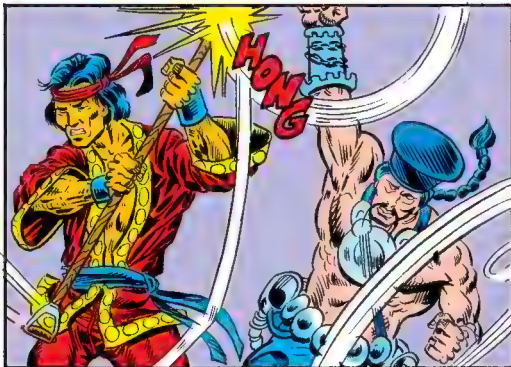
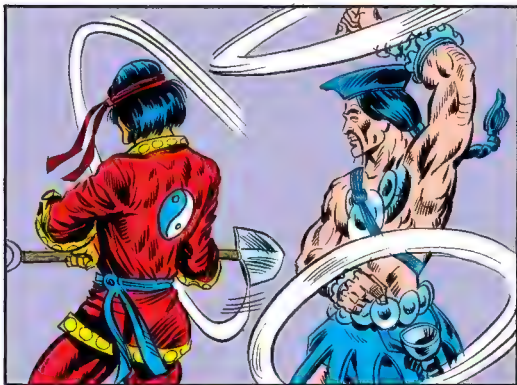
YOU SEE, I HAVE ALREADY ACCEPTED **PAYMENT**--

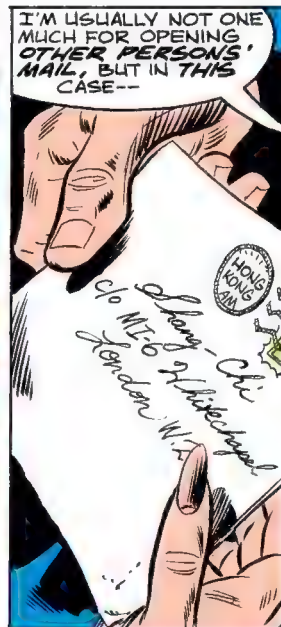


"--ALLOW MYSELF TO BE DRAWN TO HIM--"



"HE DOES NOT
FALL..."







"NOT...PERSONAL?"



OH...HELLO, DARLIN'. DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU HERE AGAIN.

COME TO RETURN THE ORCHID?

CLIVE, I-I CAME BECAUSE--



I'M READY, CLIVE!

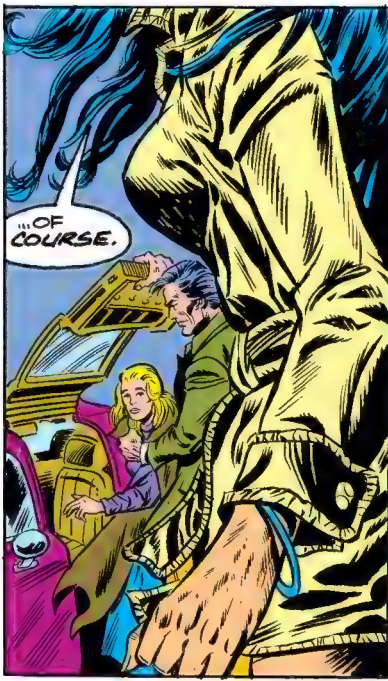
OH...I...DIDN'T REALIZE YOU ALREADY HAD SOMEONE... HERE.



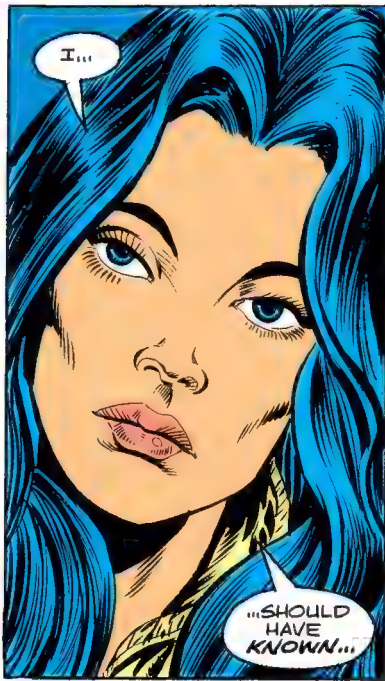
SORRY, DARLIN'--BUT YOU TOOK ONE NIGHT TOO MANY TO GET HERE, AND NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US--

--WE'VE GOT TO LOOK IN ON ANOTHER POOR SOUL.

YES...



...OF COURSE.



I...

...SHOULD HAVE KNOWN...



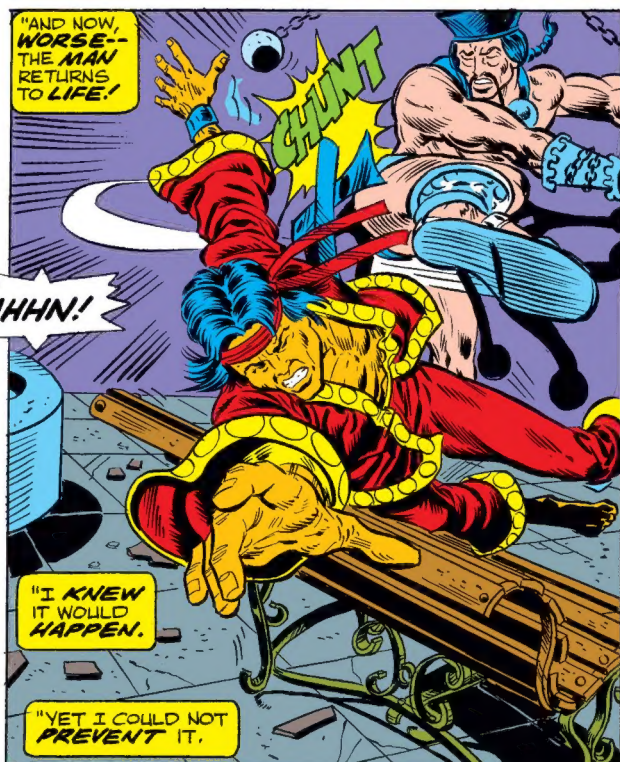
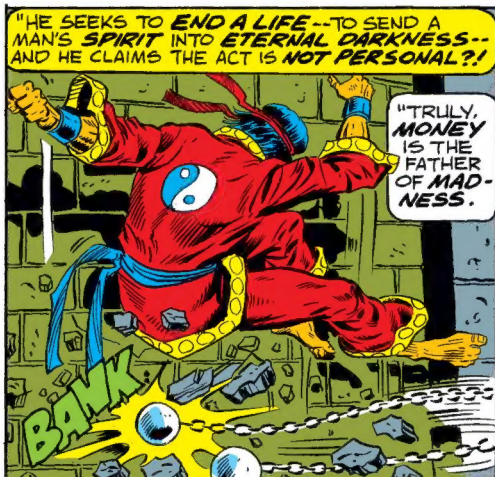
STUPID OF ME...

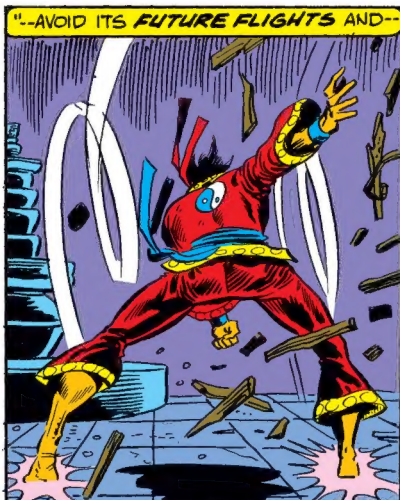
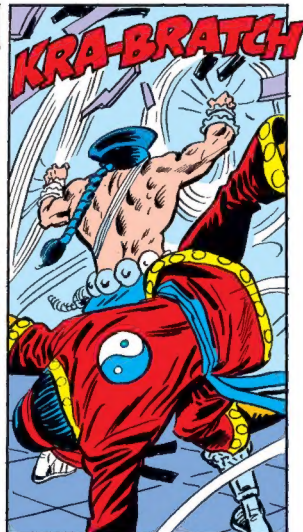
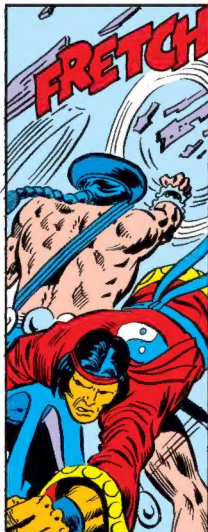
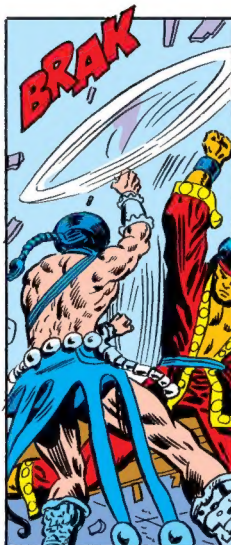
...REALLY...

...QUITE...

...STUPID...

"NOT PERSONAL!!"





THERE YOU ARE, CHI! LISTEN--WE'VE GOT A NOTE HERE FOR YOU, AND I'M AFRAID IT SPELLS TROUBLE...

NOTE?

"YES. AND NOW, THE REASON FOR HIS ATTACK--"

"THE MEANING OF HIS CRYPTIC WORDS..."

have changed, and even those spirits who once bewitched the night have faded, not have been stolen by a cold wind.

Juliette

"...IS CLEAR, ALL TOO CLEAR..."

"...AND YET AS VAGUE AS THE SHADOWED HEART OF A MYSTERY... A LOST MIDNIGHT, CLOAKED IN LONG-AGO MISTS..."

"ALL NIGHTS ARE DIFFERENT... EACH IS THE SAME."

**NEXT
ISSUE:**

SHANG-CHI LEAVES LONDON FOR THE BEGINNING OF A MOOD-SHROUDED TALE SET IN EXOTIC CHINA, ON THE HAUNTING--

"RED SEAS"

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

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ANNOUNCING: A CONTEST TO CONFOUND THE COMEAL COMICS CONNOISSEUR (In Three Parts)

As all diehard MASTER OF KUNG FU freaks are well aware by now, a somewhat special two-part story was presented in issues #59 & 60, collectively entitled "The Phoenix Gambit"—so special, in fact, that we've decided to hold a bona fide contest focusing on the first part of the story, "The Temples of Time." The contest quiz, in three parts all applying to issue #59, follows:

- 1) The story's true villain is actually *seen* (albeit as a "subliminal visage") as early as page 17. Who is the villain? In which panel does he appear? *Where* in that panel does he appear? And from which character's viewpoint is he seen? (Warning: This clue is so subtle and well hidden that even the colorist failed to notice it, so look hard.)
- 2) What is the double significance of the name "Amar-Tu"? (Hint: One is a partial anagram and the other a bad pun.)
- 3) Cite at least two other clues presented in the story.

The earliest correct entry will be printed right here in a future letters page, and the winning contestant will be awarded a copy of the original plot for "The Temples of Time" (which differs wildly from the completed script, affording a fascinating peek behind the scenes at the progressive development of a Marvel comic book, and which is, in and of itself, virtually a short prose story) autographed by writer Doug Moench—as well as a page of the actual large-size original artwork (one with plenty of action shots of Shang-Chi) from that selfsame story, donated and autographed by artist Mike Zeck!

Fair enough? Okay, then what're ya waitin' for, confound it?! Dig out your copies of issue #59 and start cookin' those brains!

And now, while we anxiously await your erudite entries, let's look in on some letters. . .

Dear Doug,

Lately Marvel mags have unfortunately slumped, giving me little inspiration to write letters of comment. However, when MOKF #56 came out, I realized there's still *one* mag that's REALLY worth reading!

"The Saga of War-Yore" is one of the most interesting concepts to appear in some time. A story, a mystery, slowly unraveling over four issues, each nonetheless filled with action and suspense, and complete in itself.

The James Bond in-joke (F.Y.E.O.) was great, but it also perpetuates the mystery. The directive, "For Your Eyes Only," indicates some *really* shady business. And judging by the apparent British Secret Service agents who are associated with War-Yore, some of whom don't know what's going on and some of whom presumably *do*, one assumes that Nayland Smith himself is implicated in the whole affair. I doubt he's behind it all, but until this bloody business is cleared up I don't want to make up my mind one way or the other. You know, one of the great unsolved mysteries of our time (fictionally speaking) concerns the British Secret Service, in circumstances somewhat similar to this. When, on the TV show "The Prisoner," Patrick McGoochan resigned from the service (much as have Chi, Clive, Wu, and Tarr), he was abducted by whoever ran the "village." Even after he escaped, he never learned who was behind the plot—but I suspect they may have been the same jokers now associated with War-Yore, whose methods have become less reserved if no less exotic.

Jim Craig obviously did a heck of a job on the art; however, and this I must *stress*, please change inkers! The current styles just do not mesh, and the inks certainly do not do Jim Craig's pencils justice. I suggest someone like Jack Abel, whose rendering of MOKF #43-44 & 48 were among the most pleasing pages of art I've ever seen.

Say, Doug, have you seen "The Spy Who Loved Me"? That movie reminded me *not* of a James Bond novel, but of one of your MOKF comics! (Except yours are more realistic.) And it's certainly the best Bond film since the classic "On Her Majesty's Secret Service."

Henry R. Kujawa
1202 Everett Street
Camden, NJ 08104

Doug heartily concurs with you, Henry, in that "Spy" and "Majesty's" are certainly two of the very best Bond films produced to date. (In fact, Doug was inspired to write "The Inferno Scheme" for the late, lamented black and white DOC SAVAGE book after he and Jumbo John Verpoorten took in a screening of "Majesty's." Deb made the pizza and popcorn, and it was a good, fun, productive night.) But, in the space allowed here, Doug can make only one comment about "Spy"—the very same comment he made about "Majesty's." Wow. . . if only they'd had Connery.

Dear Editor:

I've been a faithful reader of Shang-Chi's adventures since their inception and while I enjoy the series there's no doubt in my mind that MOKF is Marvel's most overrated comic. To listen to the readers, you'd think Doug Moench was the greatest thing in comicdom since the creation of the superhero. Not true! Doug *is* better than the average comic book writer, which is a little better than trashy. Trash is the average level of comic mag scripting, so anyone like Doug who rises above the muck is considered a near-genius. But what really irritates me about this mag is the way Leiko Wu is constantly being captured by one fiend after another. This "damsel in distress" routine is tiresome and unreal. Leiko was originally presented as a resourceful, independent lady agent — yet she's so easy to kidnap! If Shang-Chi were in War-Yore's jail, he'd be busily trying fifty different ways to escape; but Leiko, being a mere female, just sits passively in her cell. You can't have it both ways; either Leiko should be a strong, independent woman who is Shang-Chi's equal, or she should revert permanently to a typical comics female: Passive and victimized.

Selina Zane
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Sob It finally happened; MOKF got slammed in the teeth with a negative letter! And to think: Doug drove right through Phoenixville just the other day and didn't even scowl once! So much for precognition. . .

We'll let your first equation (comics=trash) rest right where it is, Selina, to be picked up by other readers if they so desire. But we think you're way off base on the Leiko issue. First, as best we can remember offhand, Leiko has been abducted three times in some thirty issues, escaping more-or-less on her own two of those times. (In the third instance, involving Mordillo, she *tried* to escape and very nearly succeeded, thwarted only by the intervention of Brynocki, and thus Greater Numbers.) Furthermore, Shang-Chi himself has been abducted or taken temporary captive far more than three times, as have Tarr and Reston, and even Smith and Petrie. There is no shame, weakness, or "sexism" inherent in being kidnapped. Indeed, a recent segment of CBS' "60 Minutes" postulated that, due to the very nature of the act (striking when the victim least expects it), kidnapping is the easiest of all major crimes to "pull off" — if not to "get away" with. And finally, concerning Leiko's stay in War-Yore's dungeon cell, after reading issue #57, we hope you found the crow tasty.

Which brings us to the brink of No More Room. Ergo. . . be good, People.